



REVISION OF B.ED. CURRICULUM IN INDIA DURING 1950S: A RETROSPECT

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of educational reconstruction in India during the post-independence period was to break the colonial legacy and build up a national system of education based on Indian culture. Teachers' training had been one of the major areas of concern of Government of India right from the inception of independence. Since then, importance of training of teachers for all levels of school education, particularly primary and secondary, had drawn the attention of educationists and national leaders. Concern for improving the quality of teacher education had been reflected in various educational documents; reports; letters and speeches delivered by eminent personalities in various occasions like seminars; conferences and meetings. Accordingly, efforts had been made for the development of teacher education programme both in terms of quantity and quality. One of the earliest tasks taken in 1950s by the Ministry of Education to improve the quality of secondary teacher education, was to revise the B.Ed. syllabus in 1956. Because, curriculum is the backbone of any educational programme which needs revision every after few years with the changes in society. Teacher education is also not an exception in this direction. Considering the Report of the 'B.Ed.' Syllabus Revision Committee as an important document for secondary teacher education programme, an effort has been made in this article to analyse the report from present perspective.

KEY WORDS: Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), Curriculum, Revision.

1. Introduction:

The main objective of educational reconstruction in India during the post-independence period was to break the colonial legacy and build up a national system of education based on Indian culture. Teachers' training had been one of the major areas of concern of Government of India right from the inception of independence. Since then, importance of training of teachers for all levels of school education, particularly primary and secondary, had drawn the attention of educationists and national leaders. Concern for improving the quality of teacher education had been reflected in various educational documents; reports; letters and speeches delivered by eminent personalities in various occasions like seminars; conferences and meetings. Accordingly, efforts had been made for the development of teacher education programme both in terms of quantity and quality. Education of secondary teachers was imparted in training colleges, which were 38 in number at the time of independence. The number rose to during 1956-57. The degree awarded after the completion of one year course was came to be known as 'B.Ed.', which replaced the earlier term 'B.T.', as per the resolution taken in the Second Conference of Training Colleges, in Mysore in 1951. One of the earliest tasks taken in 1950s by the Ministry of Education to improve the quality of secondary teacher education was to revise the B.Ed. syllabus in 1956. Because, curriculum is the backbone of any educational programme which needs revision every after few years with the changes in society. Teacher education is also not an exception in this direction.

1.1 Appointment of B.Ed. Syllabus Revision Committee:

A committee was appointed by the Ministry of Education, Government of India in 1956 to examine the syllabi prescribed for courses at the B.Ed. level. Three meetings of the committee were held: the first meeting on 7th and 9th August, the second meeting on 26th and 27th November and the third meeting on 27th December in 1956. It was pointed out in the inaugural speech delivered by Shri K.G. Saiyidin in the first meeting that "the syllabi which are followed in our universities and training colleges were in most cases drawn up some decades ago. Many of them contained elements which had no relevance to our present day educational problems. Another difficulty related to the non-availability of good Indian textbooks dealing with Indian problems. This prevented the trainees from developing a proper understanding of the Indian educational scene." (The Journal of All India Council For Secondary Education, Vol.1, No.3, March 1957, page 10). In his opinion, for preparing a model syllabus two things should be kept in mind: knowledge imparted to trainees should have relevance in the day to day working of school life and theoretical work should be linked with new social and economic forces of national life. It had been thought essential "that subjects and topics which were quiet relevant to the objectives of the training should be weeded out" (The Journal of All India Council For Secondary Education, Vol.1, No.3, March 1957, page 11) While framing the syllabus some crucial points were considered and accepted by the committee, such as:

- "Lecturers of training colleges should have had some teaching experience before their appointment as lecturers in order to ensure their conversance with problems of school teaching.
- Candidates for training should have studied at least one of their special school subjects at the graduate level and another at the high school or higher secondary school level.

- Direct questions on the content of the school subjects should be eschewed.
- Lecture work should be cut down to the minimum possible. Annotated and topical bibliographies should be prepared by the trainees.
- The numbers of periods to be allotted to lecture work and to seminar and tutorial discussions should be clearly settled at the beginning of the session." (The Journal of All India Council For Secondary Education, Vol.1, No.3, March 1957, Page 11-12)

2. Recommendations of the B.Ed. Syllabus Revision Committee On Theoretical Aspect Of B.Ed.: While considering the curriculum for the B.Ed. course it was stated that "no course of history of education should be offered at the B.Ed. level as it has no direct bearing on teaching." (The Journal of All India Council For Secondary Education, Vol.1, No.3, March 1957, page 12) The curriculum prepared by the committee consisted of four papers:

Principles of Education and School Organisation: there would be three sections in this paper:

- (a) The Principles of Education:** the meaning and purposes of education; the agencies of education; education and social change; principles of guidance; education and international understanding, the curriculum, integrated approach, democratic and totalitarian approaches- these topics might be included in this section.
- (b) Some New Practices and Trends in Education:** it would incorporate topics like individualization of instruction; use of audio-visual aids; activity methods; essential features of a progressive school; the guidance movement; diversification of courses.
- (c) Educational Organization in India with special reference to one's own State:** school organization; staffing; accommodation; equipment and other amenities; school library; classification of pupils; student government; co-curricular activities; school relationships, internal and external, students' cumulative records- these topics should be dealt with in this section.

Educational Psychology and Health Education:

This paper also had two sections:

- (a) The Individual and his needs:** topics like the developmental process; learning; mental hygiene; discipline; concept of mental measurement and interpretation of examination marks should be included in this paper.
 - (b) Functions and Responsibilities of Teachers with reference to health and disease:** this section should deal with personal and social aspects of health education; common physical defects and conditions of healthy physical life in school.
- Methods of Teaching Two School Subjects
 - Current Problems in Indian Education (A study of the most important prob-

lems of education of our country in their historical setting and in the content of foreign experience) would include the problem of free and compulsory education, basic education, the reorganization of secondary education and the language problem. Besides, a special study should be there on one of the following subjects:

- School Library Organization
- Educational and Vocational Guidance
- School Administration
- The Education of Backward Children
- Education for Rural Areas
- Educational Measurement and Evaluation
- Physical Education
- Organization of Co-curricular Activities
- Social Education

2.1 Recommendations of B.Ed. Syllabus Revision Committee on Practical Aspect of B.Ed.: The nature and extent of practical work was also discussed by the committee members. It was decided following aspects should be included in the practical work:

- Practice teaching
- Observation of lessons
- Criticism lessons
- Study of different types and grades of schools
- Organization of and participation in co-curricular activities
- Follow up of assignments given to school children and correction of their homework
- Preparation of a case study
- Preparation and use of audio visual aids
- Preparation of scholastic achievement tests and administration of tests
- Black-board work

Regarding practice teaching it was recommended that:

- There should be minimum thirty supervised lessons
- A period of about three weeks continuous block practice teaching should be provided. The trainees would be attached to one selected school during this period.
- Out of 30 prescribed lessons, half of the lessons should be delivered during the block practice teaching period.

2.3 Recommendation of B.Ed. Syllabus Revision Committee On Evaluation: The recommendations of the committee with regard to evaluation of B.Ed. were:

- Equal weightage should be given to theory and practical aspect of training: 400 marks for theory and 400 marks for practical work.
- 50% of the marks should be allotted for the sessional work
- Minimum percentage of marks for passing the examination should be 45% in aggregate and 35% in each of the written paper.

2.4 Annual Work Plan For B.Ed. Course: An annual suggested work plan had also been provide by the committee members, which is given below:

Analysis of the Programme in months:

A.	Introductory Stage (In the College)	½ Month	Preliminary training in Group Discussion and Activity Methods under 2 nd Year students
B.	First Stage (In the College)	5 ½ Months	Practical Training, Co-operative lectures and teaching experience with groups of 2 or 3 children
C.	Second Stage (In Schools)	2 ½ Months	Practical Teaching. Experience with groups of 10 or 12.
D.	Third Stage (In the College)	1-1 ½ Months	Integration of experience, group discussion, contact with 2 nd year students
E.	Holiday	1 Month	

F.	Intermediate Stage (In the College)	½ Month	Preparatory Work for full school practice and initiating 1 st year students into discussion methods
G.	Fourth Stage (In the Schools)	8 or 9 Months	Practical Teaching. Experience with full class 2/3 time, 1/3 time reading
H.	Fifth Stage (In the College)	1 or 2 Months	Conclusion of course in group discussion, lecture work with first year students etc.
I.	Final Examination	½ Month	

Total time spent in college: 9 or 10 Months

Total time spent in Schools: 10 or 11 ½ Months

The practical aspect of training was discussed thoroughly by the committee.

3.0 Conference of the Principals of the Training Colleges 1957: The report of the B.Ed. syllabus revision committee was discussed in the Conference of the Principals of the Training Colleges held at Bangalore in May, 1957.

3.1 The general framework of theoretical courses was accepted. The constitution of four theory papers were discussed in detail and it would be like this:

Principles of Education and School Organisation: this paper would include three sections- (a) Philosophical Principles (b) Sociological Principles (c) School Organisation

Educational Psychology and Health Education: the syllabus of educational psychology would centre round the topics like the development process; learning; mental hygiene and individual differences. In the syllabus of health education emphasis should be given on the practical aspects of school hygiene.

Current Problems in Indian Education: with some modifications and presumptions, the syllabus for this paper prepared by the B.Ed. Syllabus Revision Committee was adopted in the conference.

3.2 Regarding the practical aspects of training the following recommendations were adopted in the conference:

- Equal weightage to theory and practical parts of the course
- Encouraging trainee teachers to participate in co-curricular activities
- Full utilization of facilities provided by different types of neighbourhood educational institutions of teacher education college
- Provision of making a case study of a child by the trainee teacher
- Using black board as a visual aid
- Construction of at least one achievement test and administering it under controlled conditions by each trainee student
- 30 supervised lessons
- Demonstration lessons should be given by the members of the staffs of the training colleges under natural conditions in the practicing schools

3.3 Other important recommendations of the conference were:

- Objective and valid selection methods should be adopted by the training colleges. It might include tests, personality assessments and interviews.
- Considerable reduction of lecture methods and increased use of discussion, seminars, workshops, independent reading and tutorial work
- Suitable provision of library periods (two to three periods per week) should be made available in regular time table
- Aspects like classroom teaching, preparation of teaching aids, laboratory work should be included in the assessment of practical work.
- 25% marks in each of the theory paper should be reserved for internal assessment. There should be five assignments' in each paper for internal assessment.
- The ratio of pupil-teacher should not be higher than 10:1
- The number of students in a single class should be restricted to 80 and not more than 100 in a single class
- One of the criteria of teacher educator would be that should have at least three years' teaching experience in a recognized secondary school

- An experimental or demonstration school should be attached to each training college
- It was desirable that method subject teachers should teach in practicing schools at least two or three periods in a week.
- Qualifications of special subject teachers like art and physical education would depend upon the special requirements of the training colleges.

3.4 Regarding abolition of external practical examination the resolution was: "This conference recommends that the existing practice, prevalent in some universities, of having an external examination in practice teaching requiring every student to give one or two lessons before a Board of Examiners, may be dispensed with. The assessment of practice teaching should be internal and should be done by the college concerned on the basis of the candidate's practice teaching during the period of training. This conference further recommends that each university may devise suitable methods for standardizing the assessment made by each college by appointing a Co-ordinating Board." (The Journal Of All India Council For Secondary Education, Vol. 1, No. 6, June 1957, page 26)

4.0 Discussion and Conclusion:

The initiative taken by the Ministry of Education in 1956 to revise the B.Ed. curriculum was undoubtedly a major step towards qualitative improvement of teacher education. The idea behind this effort was that every curriculum should be revised after a regular interval of 5-6 years to keep itself update and alive. Two basic things were considered at the time of framing the curriculum: (a) it should be relevant to our national life (b) there should be a close link between theory and practice. The syllabus was prepared keeping in mind the educational needs of the contemporary Indian society. It is clear from the suggested annual work plan that the revised B.Ed. syllabus, prepared sixty years back from today, was for a B.Ed. course of two years duration. They had realized that minimum two years duration of pre-service secondary teacher education programme would be required to become a professional teacher. More time was allotted for engagement with school than in the training college itself. Equal weightage was given to theory and practical aspects of training. The entire curriculum was revised in a very comprehensive manner that took into account all round development of a teacher's personality. Every aspect of teacher education had been dealt with very wisely such as: admission criteria, qualifications of teacher educators, teacher pupil ratio, and infrastructural facilities of a training college, demonstration school, assessment and evaluation. No major difference has been found between the basic structure and curriculum of secondary teacher education programme of present day (2017) and the revised B.Ed. syllabus of 1957. What we have today in our B.Ed. programme is the modified form of, what we had sixty years back.

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2. The Journal of All India Council For Secondary Education, Vol. 1, No. 6, June 1957, New Delhi